The User Port

An Educational Tool For 64 & 128 Owners

Published by The Rancocas Valley Users Group

Volume 19, Issue 7 **November 2002**

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1. RVUG opposes pirating of commercial software and will not have its members or guests making or swapping unauthorized copies during RVUG meetings.

2.Copying may be done on:
   (a) Programs you have written
   (b) Public domain programs
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3.Violators will be suspended from the meeting.

RVUG Meeting Dates: **Thursday**, November 7, 2002. The dates are on the 1st Thursday unless otherwise noted. We meet in the Cinnaminson Library at 7:00 pm in the basement meeting room. Please try to get to the meeting on time. You will be advised of any changes.

From The Desk Of The Editor: Seven members were present at the October 10th meeting. Although our Internet Guru was unable to be with us the meeting was still interesting and informative. Disks of the month for September and October were distributed by our PD Librarian, Glen Bauscher.THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH: The man who believes he can do something is probably right, and so is the man who believes he can't.---------- "The art of being wise is the the art of knowing what to overlook.
- William James

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Please note: Thursday, November 7th is the date of our next meeting. See you there!

Homestead Digest
Any Commodore Topic Goes List

List Admin: Bruce Thomas
homestead-admin@videocam.net.au

Supported by: VideoCam Services
http://cbm.videocam.net.au

List Address homestead@videocam.net.au
List URLhttp://cbm.videocam.net.au/mailman/listinfo/homestead

List Help homestead-request@videocam.net.au
Add 'help' in the subject or message body.

From: "Bruce Thomas" <b_thomas@telusplanet.net>
Date: Wed, 7 Aug 2002 08:56:15 -0600
Subject: [Homestead] Re: [GTM] History of GEOS

----- Original Message -----
From: "Alvaro Alonso_G"

> Has anyone known the origin and history of GEOS: the why, when and the people behind?
>

Alvaro,

In Issue #18 of GeoWorld Magazine from 1989 there is an article called "the GEOS Report". This is the first of a five-part series on the use of GEOS and it contains a brief history of Berkeley SoftWorks (BSW) and the development of GEOS. Here is a condensed version of the history according to that article:

Mattel, the toy company, was going great guns making video games. A young fellow named Brian Dougherty left Mattel and formed another Video Game company called Imagic. After some success Brian left Imagic and formed BSW to convert Video Games to work on Personal Computers. One of the BSW Hardware Specialists, Dave Durran, spent time working on an In-Circuit Emulator to give software developers a faster development cycle. The ICE unit did not sell well.

BSW then paired up with a firm that made small batteries. The two companies began working on a product for the airlines called the Sky Tray. It was to be a battery powered computer with a liquid crystal display and membrane keyboard that fit in the seat trays. The Sky Tray was to be a 6502 based computer and BSW would develop the O.S. for it. The code was written for the GUI interface but then airline deregulation happened and all in-flight extras were trimmed to save weight and fuel - this included the airlines cutting plans for the Sky Tray.

Mr. Dougherty then noticed that he had an orphaned operating system for a 6502 based computer and there were a pile of Commodore 64's being sold every day without a GUI interface. With a small amount of modification to the Sky Tray code GEOS was born. GEOS was introduced in March of 1986 for the C-64. In 1987 GEOS was released for the C-128 and in 1988 a version for the Apple II computer was published. GEOS V2.0 for the C-64 was released in 1988 and GEOS 128 V2.0 was released in 1989.

Apart from various BSW Applications being released in subsequent years there were no changes to the basic Operating System until the release of Wheels in 1998. There is also the MegaPatch3 upgrade for the OS but it isn't that popular in North America.

I hope that provides the details you were looking for.

Bruce

WANTED--- by Gil Heath ---one 1351 Mouse in good working condition!!! See Gil at Nov meeting or contact him at home.

A WRITING PLAN

compiled from various sources

(Publishing Editor's Note: I put this article under "Trailing Edge" because writing on a 64, using a word processor such as Easy Script, was among the very first things we did on a Commodore. In fact, my son used it to prepare reports for a high school class until the teacher forced him to stop. The other kids in class complained because they felt it gave him an unfair advantage. Imagine how many year ago that must have been! K.D.S.)

It is said that if people can understand what you speak, you can write. Many, though, say that attempting to write has the same effect on them as a person suffering from stage fright. Those who study such things, however, insist that the two experiences are not the same. "Stage fright" involves the emotions whereas the difficulty a person might experience writing what is otherwise easily spoken is merely a matter of mental-motor coordination, like being able to draw what the mind pictures.

As one put it, just as riding a bike is different from walking, so is writing different from speaking. And just as a person can learn how to ride a bike -- some more readily than others, people can also learn how to write -- some more readily than others. It just takes practice.

Another noted that talking is a naturally acquired function; writing is not. The cerebral process involved in speaking is different from writing. The mind must be trained to accomplish it.

When it comes to learning how to write, the instruction usually involves spelling, punctuation, composition, and grammar. Grammar, though, is applicable to both speaking and writing. And while spelling and punctuation are important functions of writing, they are but the technical aspects of placing the spoken word into a visual medium. Spelling has to do with reproducing the sound of the spoken word when read. Punctuation has to do with replicating the pauses and inflections of the spoken word.

To accomplish writing what is otherwise easily spoken, therefore, needs to focus on composing the words. There are various techniques used by writers to accomplish composition. All of the methods involve organization of thought and, of course, writing.

Where you already know what it is you want to say, the following exercise is suggested. Begin by listing the points you want to make. If the thinking hasn't quite jelled, list the ideas you want to explore. Then write out the thoughts associated with each. While this procedure is readily done on paper, using a word processor makes it simpler because what is written can easily be jockeyed around and doesn't require rewriting.

If only the subject you want to write about is known, the process for developing what to say requires a different course. One approach begins by listing the subject, then answering questions about it. The answers form the basis of what will be said.

A common questioning technique asks WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHY, HOW of the subject as applicable. If an answer is forthcoming from possessed knowledge, it is written out. If the answer is not known, the question guides the study for the answer. Further information is quickly developed by asking the same six questions of the answers. The aforementioned exercise can then be employed to compose the material into an organized presentation.

---R.L.M.---

Ray Carlsen's Commodore Hardware Repair Page

www.prismnet.com/~bo/commie/repair.html

The following are some great repair tips from Ray Carlsen of Carlsen's Electronics. He is a frequent sick-computer saviour on the newsgroup comp.sys.cbm. Included are some easy to do upgrade ideas for your hardware, including reset switches, fans, heat sinks, etc.

Repair your 1541 Disk Drive

Device select switches in your Commodore Drives.

Installing reset switches in your Commodore Drives

Symptoms and Cures for C64 ICs

Installing a reset switch in your Commodore 8-bit computer

Heat-sinking your Commodore 64 ICs.

Cooling fans for your Commodore Computers/Drives

Commodore keyboards -- Exposed.

Symptoms and Cures for C128 IC

If you would like to contact Ray Carlsen, the author of these articles, he may be reached at rrcc@u.washington.edu or rcarlsen@i-link-2.net

Ray Carlsen is one of those unique individuals who is willing to help others by sharing his knowledge in the field of electronic repairs. As mentioned above, Ray is a frequent sick-computer saviour on the newsgroup comp.sys.cbm where he tries to help Commodore users solve their hardware problems.

If you'd like to read some of the hundreds of hardware related articles posted on ***comp.sys.cbm*** by Ray, check out ***DejaNews.*** Locate any one of Ray's articles by entering his name in the search field, and then click on ***Author Profile.***

I recently checked it out and found 898 articles posted by Ray Carlsen to many different newsgroups including 446 articles on *comp.sys.cbm* and 313 articles on *sci.electronics.repair*.

EARNING $$$ WITH THE 64

by **Rolf L. Miller**

Yes, the 64 on this desk is used to accomplish most of the office work required by the job. But those wages are not the subject of this article. Also not considered here is the income from other activities which the Commodore facilitates, such as various bookkeeping chores and the printing of agreements, contracts, etc. Instead, the focus is the extra dollars directly generated with the 64.

Earning additional money serves several purposes in this household. For one thing, it allows acquiring extras. After all, life gets a little boring without an occasional splurge.

Added dollars are also laid aside for the 'Autumn of Life.' Otherwise, one might see the golden years turn to brass.

Then there is the sense of accomplishment. Don't misunderstand. There is a love for the job. Writing articles for the *Digest* has its rewards. But it is especially satisfying when a check arrives in the mail as payment for published material.

Getting paid to put together someone's resume, transcribing another's work and similar activities is good money too, but it is not the same. The difference has to do with who authored the material. Yes, it is indeed something special when your creative effort is judged worthy enough by others to pay you for it.

Now, before you think you cannot write, consider that writing is essentially just the spoken word set to print. So, if what you say makes sense, writing what you say will make sense.

And before you think you cannot get paid for your writing, consider the fact that much of what you read in newspapers, magazines, and books is written by people who get paid for it. Also, nearly everything you hear on the radio and see on TV and in theaters is the product of writers who get paid for their words.

And those who are responsible for filling those pages, airwaves, and entertainment centers with fare are looking for writers. A trip to the library and perusing a book called the "Writer's Market" will convince you of that fact. It will also tell who is looking for what. Yes, this is a competitive market, but the next time you read, see, or hear something which you don't think much of, know that it got selected for lack a of better offering.

And you don't need a fancy word processor or printer. Editors want straight text, plain type, whether it be an e-mailed submission or a hardcopy manuscript. Otherwise, it is rejected without being read. Therefore, the Commodore with a text-base internet connection and/or any decent NLQ printer serves quite nicely.

About what should you write? About what you know or learn. A good article gives facts about a subject which both justify a stated purpose and support a conclusion. Or, if you can recount (real or otherwise) how someone overcame obstacles to accomplished what is wanted, then you have the basis for a good story. ---R.L.M.---

COMPUTER TESTING "CAN'T LOSE DEALS"

As a rule, if something is too good to be true, it usually is. Can't-lose-deals are likewise usually scams. Nonetheless, folks who get taken are forever in the news.

Greed, of course, is a common factor in this. But that's human nature. So, if temptation beckons, turn on the computer and check things out.

Games of chance are a popular breeding ground for scams. The hook in gambling is the belief that the player has a chance to win. The hook in a scam is the appearance of a "can't lose" situation. It is, naturally, a deception.

For example, consider this "sure" thing. You toss a coin. If the coin comes up tails, you pay me a dollar. If the coin comes up heads, I get to toss the coin. If the second toss comes up tails, you pay me a dollar. But if the second coin toss comes up heads, I will pay you two dollars.

The hook in this scam is the appearance that you only have to win once out of three tosses to break even. And since odds are you'll win half the time, you can't lose.

But take another look. Half the time you lose on the first coin toss. So half the time the second toss where you can win doesn't occur. That means you win only 1/4 of the time and I win 3/4 of the time. In other words, if you play four times, you will win two dollars one time, but I will win one dollar three times. Thus, you can't win.

To see the reality, run the following routine which simulates the results.

```
10 ym$="your money=":y=1000
20 mm$="my money=":m=y
30 for i=1 to 1000:r=rnd(0)
40 if r>=.5 then y=y-1:m=m+1:goto 99
50 r=rnd(0)
60 if r>=.5 then y=y-1:m=m+1:goto 99
70 y=y+2:m=m-2
99 print chr$(147)ym$;y"  "mm$;m:next
```

Writing a program to simulate an activity involves separating what is done into its component parts, then developing code to represent each part. In this case, line 10 & 20 establish beginning equal amounts for the two participants. Then line 30 sets up a FOR loop to provide 1000 coin tosses. R=RND(0) is used to represent the first toss.

(Continued on page 5.)

The Digest is always looking for articles and stories relating to Commodore use, *though we don't pay for them.* :-(

THE ELECTRONIC HOBBYIST AND THE COMMODORE

(Managing Editor's note: Some use their Commodores in ways which others would never dream of doing. It is not thought, therefore, that recounting a unique use will find most flocking to try it. But reading about it might trigger the imagination regarding this and other applications.)

Those who enjoy electronic projects often use the Commodore only if it is meant to utilize the end results. In other words, the design and construction of the device does not involve the Commodore other than planning the electronics around the Commodore's innards.

However, this passive participation does not have to be the case. The Commodore can take part in both the design and construction of electronic circuits. And it can be used this way whether or not the end results are meant for Commodore use.

First, there are programs for the Commodore which can assist in the design of circuits. These calculate the electronic components and their necessary values for a given circuit. Most of these are in the public domain, and while many of them concern projects pertaining to electronics of days gone by, some are updated versions reflecting current technology. After all, *Ohm's law* hasn't changed.

Second, there are Commodore programs which can be used in the actual creation of circuit boards. As Tom Luff recounted in an article which appeared in the Spring 2002 TPUG Newsletter, he uses his 64 in both the design and layout of printed circuit boards. He prefers to construct his own circuit boards because it allows him to choose just where components will reside, and printed circuits eliminate the tangle of wires that otherwise result when connecting everything.

Briefly, creating a printed circuit board involves making a resist-tracing of the circuit on a copper-clad board, then using a chemical wash to etch away the copper not covered by the resist-tracing, followed by drilling holes as necessary. The resist-tracing can be drawn by hand or accomplished with a photoactinic process. Tom uses the latter method, which involves the use of copper-clad boards having a photosensitive layer, along with a transparency of the circuit.

To create the transparency, Tom uses two programs: Flexi-draw 5.5 and Fun Graphic Machine (FGM) version 8. He says that while both programs have very good object copy features and zoom manipulation, which are critical to this type of work, each program has features the other does not. For example, Flexi-draw can use a mouse or a light pen whereas FGM cannot. On the other hand, FGM contains some image manipulation options along with a wide variety of printing options not available in Flexi-draw.

So, he begins with Flexi-draw. It provides for a reference grid which allows accurate work, and contains two work areas. The drawing effort can occur in one area and images, such as schematic symbols for electronic components, etc., can be loaded into the other area from where they can be copied and pasted into the drawing effort.

Flexi-draw saves its work areas in the same 32-block format as is used by FGM. This allows for direct loading. Tom utilizes FGM's ability to shift screen images vertically and horizontally one pixel at a time to facilitate labeling components. Also, the three screens available can be linked vertically or horizontally to allow seamless joining of images. Zoom (pixel-mode) editing finishes the work.

Printing the completed circuit drawing to scale is accomplished by selecting the appropriate dot-per-inch (DPI) printer setting. For instance, an FGM screen consists of 320 bits (dots) across. Thus, printing a screen at 80 DPI will consume 4 inches across whereas printing at 120 DPI will reduce the screen image to 2 2/3 inches across.

Tom uses a printer for which version 8 of FGM also allows selecting the vertical density. FGM screens consists of 200 bits (dots) down. So, printing at 60 vertical DPI fits a screen in 3 1/3 inches down, whereas increasing the vertical density to 72 DPI reduces the screen image to just over 2 3/4 inches down.

Other FGM printer options include double strike (and NLQ in version 8) which makes for darker output. Tom then takes the printout of the circuit to a copy shop and has it photocopied onto a transparent sheet for use in making the final printed circuit board. **---R.L.M.---**

"Can't Lose" continued from page 4

RND(0) produces a pseudo-random value greater than zero less than 1. Since the outcome of a coin toss can be either heads or tails, half the value can be used to represent each of the two possible outcomes. So in line 40, R>=.5 is used to represent tails, and if tails, you pay me a dollar is represented as THEN Y=Y-1:M=M+1 and GOTO 99 to display the results and do the NEXT coin toss.

But if the value is less than .5 (heads), program execution passes to line 50 to represent me getting to toss the coin. If this second toss also comes up tails, you pay me a dollar as represented in line 60.

But if the value is less than .5 (heads), program execution passes to line 70 to represent me paying you two dollars, and line 99 displays the results and does the NEXT coin toss. **--R.L.M.--**

Another Look at **geoSHELL**

compiled from various sources

If you are a GEOS user, is there anything you would like to change? Instead of having to first boot the Desktop to select an application, maybe you would prefer just typing a two-character command. Or, perhaps, you'd like to see a menu from which you could choose your most often used applications. And what about backing up files: would you like to automate that chore? Or, how about having the calendar immediately appear when GEOS is booted? All of these things and more are possible with the use of geoSHELL.

A "shell" is a program which simplifies direct access to the operating system. A DOS shell, for instance, provides menus and/or shortcuts to sidestep the need to type precise and sometimes arcane commands to access the disk drive. GeoSHELL sidesteps the Desktop as a means of getting around GEOS.

Why would you want to? First, geoSHELL will perform most of the same functions available from the Desktop, but is faster. Instead of loading the desktop, then reading the directory, then loading the graphic images representing its contents, geoSHELL waits for the user to tell it what to do. So, for example, if the want is to use a certain application, instead of searching the Desktop for it, just execute a two-character command. GeoSHELL will then go look for it, and automatically check every drive on your system to find it.

While a number of these two-character commands are predefined, they can be changed, others added, and function keys programmed. Or, a menu can be used. Or, display the directory, stop it when the desired file is located, and double-click on it to run.

Because geoSHELL can be used in place of the Desktop, it can be made to automatically load during initial bootup and install itself as the default Desktop. Doing this, though, does not prevent use of the Desktop if desired. GeoSHELL can be exited anytime to the Desktop and, likewise, the Desktop exited back to geoSHELL. This is also true for any of the Desktop replacements.

Besides providing a convenient environment from which to directly access applications, geoSHELL contains a built-in DOS wedge to ease issuing disk drive commands. There are also commands to simplify copying files, making backups, etc. And there is no lack of device support in geoSHELL: if your GEOS system supports it, geoSHELL will support it.

While many of the commands are initialized when geoSHELL is first loaded, others are stored in separate files on disk. These files can be edited or new commands files can be created. This not only makes geoSHELL expandable, but extremely flexible.

Among the files that can be created are EXEC files. Indeed, this is one of the most powerful aspects of geoSHELL. These EXEC files can be used to accomplish any number of special tasks on command. It's kind of like writing a little BASIC program to do it. Menus can be created, a printing job automated, even all the files for an application can be made to load followed by executing the application -- the possibilities are endless.

And geoSHELL can be setup to execute EXEC files during bootup! That means the entire startup can be customized to suit the user. In fact, all the elements necessary for a given task can be made to boot up in one fell swoop.

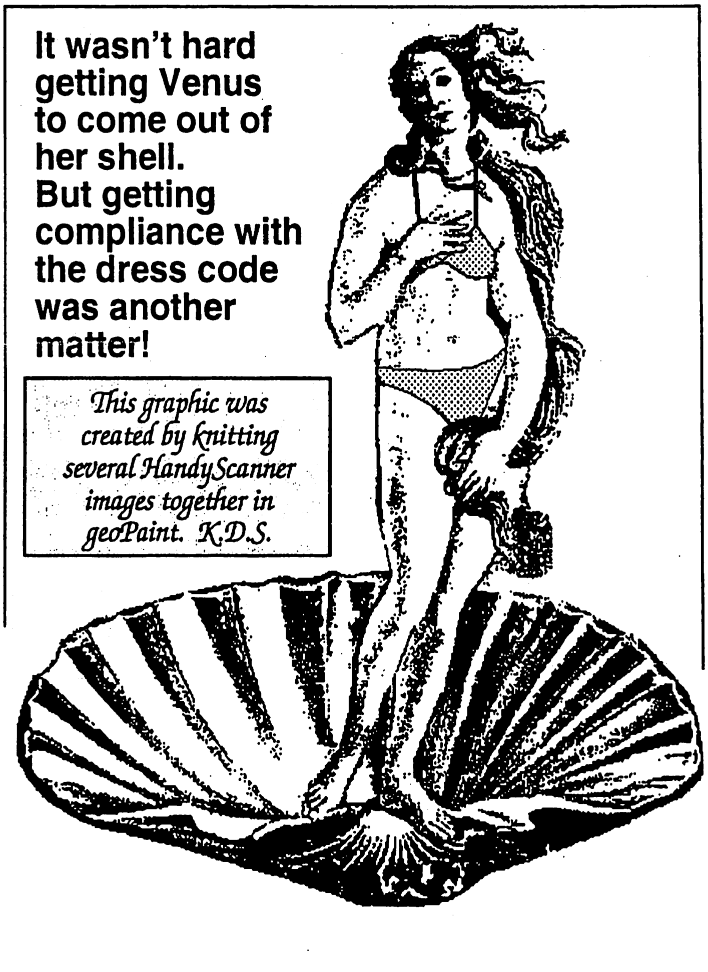
Finally, unlike the Desktop, there is no need for multiple copies of geoSHELL. Rather, there is a little file for that purpose called GETSHELL. This program's job is to find geoSHELL wherever it is in your system and to load it. And this opens the door to eliminating all but one copy of the Desktop on the system. To access it, merely set up a command file to go to the disk or partition where it resides and exit geoSHELL. Actually, the same can be done for everything that is made geoSHELL related.

Maurice Randall is the author of GeoSHELL. It comes with documentation, contains built-in help, and help files.

geoSHELL is available from:
Click Here Software
PO Box 606
Charlotte MI 48813

To order, call 866-263-7539
For info, call 517-543-5202

---R.L.M.---



It wasn't hard getting Venus to come out of her shell. But getting compliance with the dress code was another matter!

This graphic was created by knitting several HandyScanner images together in geoPaint. K.D.S.